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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1764
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1890
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0475
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1167
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1524
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1946
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4375
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AF/S FOR S. HILL,
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/16/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: SUPER TUESDAY: MAKONI ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY

Classified By: Amb. James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

11. (U) Ending weeks of speculation, Simba Makoni announced he will be a candidate for president. At a press conference, Makoni said that he was disturbed by the poverty and plight of the Zimbabwean people, and that he blamed this on national governance. He had hoped that the ZANU-PF Congress in December would have produced alternatives, but nominations for presidential candidates were not permitted. He stated his preference would have been to run as a ZANU-PF candidate, but since this was not possible, he would run as an independent. Responding to questions, he declined to reveal his base of support but said this would be made known in coming days. He also declined to discuss whether he had alerted President Robert Mugabe to his decision; referring to a widely publicized meeting with Mugabe January 22 where it was reported that he pledged allegiance to Mugabe and ZANU-PF, Makoni would only say they discussed the "speculation" regarding his possible candidacy.

12. (C) COMMENT. ZANU-PF dissident Ibbo Mandaza has been pushing Makoni's candidacy for some time. The general consensus among analysts--and even Makoni's friends--was that he lacked the courage to take Mugabe on. His candidacy has surprised the political and diplomatic community, and undoubtedly ZANU-PF.

13. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED. Mandaza told polecon chief February 2 that Makoni would register as a candidate for president. He also said that Makoni had the support of the Mujuru faction and from within the ZANU-PF faction in Matabeleland comprised of ex-ZAPU. He opined that Mugabe would be seriously weakened by Makoni's decision, and would be debilitated as a candidate. In the coming days we will sound out contacts in an effort to gauge Makoni's support, particularly in light of the disunity of the MDC (Septel) and what we have heard is Arthur Mutambara's endorsement of Makoni. END COMMENT.

